

**Prayer of the Day:**

Our Father in Heaven, rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end and graciously take us from this valley of sorrows to Yourself in heaven; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day: The Seventh Petition**

But deliver us from evil.

*What does this mean?*

In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

**Sermon:**

Evil. That is a word that plagues the Christian heart and mind. Ever since Eden, it is a reality in which we operate. Martin Luther offers us four categories of evil when he writes, *“evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation.”*

Pastor Lauersdorf writes, *“For the body, there are lungs that can’t breathe, kidneys that fail, cells that grow wild, and lymph glands that spread cancer. There are bodies that go hungry and bodies that grow old. There are accidents, diseases, and death. For property, there’s the moth of inflation, the rust of recession, the mold of unemployment, the doors we must lock on our homes and cars, the smoke alarms and fire stations so often necessary, the lack of rain, and then again too much of it. For our reputation, there’s deceitful lies, gossip and slander, betrayal of confidences or sins, and the like, all dredged up from the swamp of hell by the greatest liar of all, the devil. Let’s not forget the greatest evil of all, that which threatens the soul. There’s indifference to the soul’s needs leading to spiritual death by slow starvation. Trusting in one’s own works self-righteously pushing the Savior out of the picture. Worldliness misdirecting the soul fatally into the backwaters of possession and pleasure. False Teachings deluding the soul’s taste buds with their poison. Ill will and quarrels, jealousies, and hatred causing the soul to shed bitter tears.”* Dear friends, I would dare say that looking over the list, evil has at least at some point or another in our lives made contact. Forced us to wrestle with it. Troubled our hearts and minds, yes, our very souls. Make no mistake, it all comes from the same source – these are all the consequences of sin, and the reality of living in a sinful world, ultimately brought into being by the one who opposes and torments, tempts, and troubles. Yes, satan, who, as we said last week first came to Adam and Eve and has brought trouble upon humanity ever since. So the Greek here actually allows for a slightly different translation from the one commonly used, *But deliver us from the evil one!*

I’m hearing the question more and more again. Usually raised by the crowd that is already leaning away from God or which has given up on Him completely. But it bears our time given the subject matter. If God is good, then how can He allow evil to happen in this world? In the world of apologetics, defending the truths of God’s Word, it is known by its shorter name, the problem of evil.

Without turning this into an all-day seminar on the existence of evil. Perhaps it is quickest to look at it through the lens of the address to our prayer. God is our Father, our parent. As such, He will often act in ways very similar to a loving parent with a wayward child. If I have rebuffed and refused every attempt to learn an important truth through the use of reason, then there is often only one school left, the school of hard knocks. If for example, I have rejected any attempt to teach me to keep the fourth commandment and respect those whom God has placed in authority over me because more than anything I think I should be the final authority, I may have to learn the hard way that my desire doesn’t eradicate truth. So I may be allowed to learn this lesson from the confines of a cell rather than in the loving embrace of a home. It may be the only

**TEXT: 7<sup>th</sup> Petition (NIV84)**

But deliver us from Evil.

Matthew 6:13



way that would ultimately turn me from the evil I had embraced and back to my God. Loving parents know that sometimes hardship (evil) is necessary, at least in small doses to prevent greater evils to overcome. We often call this discipline and while we do not like it, a loving parent will use it for the good of their child. Scripture teaches that we know that *in all things God works for the good of those who love Him who have been called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28). God delivers us not by taking it away but by allowing it to serve as a teacher to prevent even greater harm. This may be quick and immediate or like Paul's thorn in the flesh remaining with us throughout our lives to serve as a constant deterrent. Already it stands to reason that a perfect and loving God would not always remove evil from the life of people.

However, it must be admitted that evil can also exist, at least in our estimation for no immediate life lesson. This is the unfortunate reality of living in a world we have corrupted with sin. Sometimes there is no other conceivable purpose, at least in our estimation, other than to say our sin has subjected the world to decay and it now groans in eager expectation for that last and final day of the Lord. A reminder so to speak that sin has consequences, real and lasting ones as it rips us away from the loving God we accuse of having brought it about. In our Gospel Lesson, Jesus announced, <sup>24</sup> *"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master."* Or more bluntly stated in the book of John *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you* (John 15:18-19). This swerves into the theology of the cross and the suffering we will endure as being people of God. But even here dear friends it is not without purpose. It reminds us that evil is the way of the world and that God has called us out of it. It teaches us to yearn for that which will be better.

Perhaps that's as good of a transition as any to move us away from the bummer topic of evil itself and into the discussion of a God Who really does deliver us from it. Make no mistake about it the first mistake of the accusation of those who would besmirch the good name of God is that evil cannot serve a good purpose in the hands of a loving God. The second is that God has not done anything about it. The truth is that He most certainly has.

I will never forget the words of my pastor growing up as he taught us about this prayer. His comment was simple. After speaking the words of the 7<sup>th</sup> petition he paused and announced, "This prayer is dangerous, make sure you mean it." You see dear friends, God has secured the victory for us over every foe. Sin has been defeated, swallowed up in the forgiveness that Christ won for you on the cross. Satan's grip has been forever broken. No longer a slave to him I can say no to the wicked temptations He brings. The world has even been overcome, the reality is that I am not its citizen any longer but through faith, I am a child of God and an heir of heaven itself. However, this side of heaven, while their power is broken they still wage their winless war against God and His people. This prayer is fully and most visibly answered in the eternity God has prepared for us all with Him. John announced in the book of Revelation, *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

We want perfection in an imperfect world but God wants us to save it. To hold out His Word to all who so desperately need to hear it. So He bids us stay. He bids us work in a world that hated Him so that more and more may know Him. But He doesn't leave you without hope. As we do His work, as we struggle and toil in the evil we have ultimately brought into the world. We do so in the power of the forgiveness He has already won. We find strength in it to stand against the evils of the world that needs to hear about Him. He will eventually give us all that we have dreamed of. When He removes us from the imperfection of an imperfect world and brings us to Himself in the glory of heaven.

Dear Christians, until God calls us home, until we see the ultimate fulfillment of this prayer, may we pray it all the more. Anticipating the victory and finding the strength it provides. Yes, confident that Evil is Eradicated in Christ. Amen!